(c) As far as Ministry of Women and Child Development is concerned, the Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act, 1956 (ITPA) supplemented by the Indian Penal Code prohibits trafficking in women and children for purposes of prostitution and lays down severe penalties for traffickers. The ITPA is now being further amended providing for more stringent punishment for trafficking in persons. The Ministry of Women and Child Development conducts advocacy, awareness generation, sensitization programmes for prevention of trafficking for prostitution, including traditional practices of devdasis. State Governments undertake preventive and awareness programmes.

(d) and (e) As per information received from Maharashtra, there are 4321 Devdasis.

The Maharashtra Government has intimated that the tradition of Devdasi is carried out in Khanoba Temple, Jajuri Tehsil of Pune District.

The State Government of Karnataka through Women and Child Development Department has conducted a survey during 1993-94 and identified 22783 Devdasis. The State Government has intimated that the custom of Devdasi is not a practice any more in the State.

As per the information received from Government of Andhra Pradesh, a detailed survey identified 24,093 Devdasis in the State.

The State Government has intimated that the custom of Devdasi is not practice any more in the State.

(f) Under the Acts pertaining to the prohibition and dedication of Devdasis whoever performs, promotes, abets, takes part in dedication ceremony is liable for punishment.

Infant mortality

3029. SHRIMATI HEMA MALINI: Will the Minister of WOMEN AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that 12 lakhs new born children die in the first four weeks and 8 lakhs die before completing one year of their life;

(b) whether it is also a fact that 47 per cent of children under the age of 3 years are underweight;

(c) whether it is a fact that every minute one child dies of malnutrition in the country; and

(d) what steps are being taken to bring down infant mortality and proportion of underweight children in the past three years from 2003-04 to 2005-06 and the result thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF WOMEN AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT (SHRIMATI RENUKA CHOWDHURY): (a) According to Sample Registration System (SRS) Bulletin 2006, the infant mortality rate in the country is 58 per 1000 live births.

(b) As per National Family Health Survey (NFHS) 3 conducted during 2005-06, 46% children under the age of 3 years are underweight.

(c) The details of number of child-deaths due to malnutrition, a multifaceted problem, are not maintained centrally. However, malnutrition is not a direct cause of death but it can increase morbidity and mortality by reducing the resistance to infections.

(d) The Government is implementing a number of schemes which improve the nutritional status of children. Some of these are:

(i) Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) (Ministry of Women and Child Development);

(ii) National Programme for Nutritional Support to Primary Education (Mid-Day Meal Scheme) [Department of School Education and Literacy];

(iii) Nutrition Programme for Adolescent Girls on 51 districts to provide free foodgrains to undernourished adolescent girls and pregnant and nursing mothers (Ministry of Women and Child Development);

(iv) Nutrition Education and Training Programme of Food and Nutrition Board (Ministry of Women and Child Development);

(v) Reproductive and Child Health (RCH-II) Programme under National Rural Health Mission (NRHM) including:

> Maternal Health by promoting institutional deliveries, improved coverage and quality of ante natal care (ANC), skilled care to pregnant women, Post-partum care at Community level.

> Immunization.

> Integrated management of Neonatal and Childhood illness and malnutrition.

> emphasis on Infant and Young Child feeding.

> Specific Programmes to prevent and combat micronutrient deficiencies of Vitamin A and Iron and Folic Acid through Vitamin A Supplementation for children till the age of 5 years and Iron and Folic Acid Supplementation for pre school chidren, pregnant and lactating women.

(Ministry of Health and Family Welfare)

(vi) National Iodine Deficiency Disorders Control Programme (Ministry of Health and Family Welfare);

(vii) Targeted Public Distribution System (Department of Food and Public Distribution).

(viii) Accelerated Rural Water Supply Programme/Swajaldhara and Total Sanitation Campaign; National Rural Employment Guarantee Programme (Ministry of Rural Development).

The Infant Mortality Rate, Which was 63 per 1000 live births in 2002, has declined to 58 per 1000 live births in 2006.

Awareness against female foeticide

3030. SHRIMATI SYEDA ANWARA TAIMUR: Will the Minister of WOMEN AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) the steps Government have taken to generate awareness against female foeticide and other social evils against the girl child;

(b) whether Government are planning to provide monetary benefits and other incentives exclusively to the girl child; and

(c) the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF WOMEN AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT (SHRIMATI RENUKA CHOWDHURY): (a) The Government is adopting a multi pronged approach for tackling female foeticide and other social evils which include awareness and gender sensitization for enhancing the value of the girl child and also implementing schemes for survival, welfare and development of the girl child.